



Turnaround School Operator (TSO)

Questions and Answers

1. Q. Is there a possibility that some schools on the state's list could make adequate improvement in the sixth year and no longer be on the list?

A. Intervention is possible if a school remains in the lowest school improvement category in the fifth year following initial placement. If a school moves out of the lowest category, it is not eligible for intervention.
2. Q. How will schools be funded?

A. Schools are funded by general tuition support, federal grants and local tax support. It is the IDOE's intent to make as much of the financial supports available to the TSO as possible within the confines of the law and rules regulating the control of these funds. A list of the estimated tuition support and the cash balances is posted at www.doe.in.gov/turnaround.
3. Q. May the school's name change?

A. There does not appear to be a prohibition against this.
4. Q. Who owns the school?

A. The school corporation retains ownership of the facility. The State Board appoints a manager to operate the school.
5. Q. Is there flexibility of programming?

A. Yes. The TSO should use the data to determine needs of the students and make decisions accordingly.
6. Q. Explain what an "observational or transitional" year might look like.

A. The TSO would have an opportunity to spend a significant amount of time in the school during the observation or transitional year. This time could be used to determine curriculum and schedules, recruit and hire staff, establish community partners, determine services for students with special needs, engage with parents and arrange for services with outside vendors (e.g., transportation). We would expect the TSO to spend time in the school getting to know the students and staff.

7. Q. May multiple TSOs partner in one school?
- A. Yes. The TSP has the flexibility to enter into agreements with other partners.
8. Q. Will next year's RFP work in the same way?
- A. We anticipate the RFP process will work the same next year.
9. Q. How can we have access to existing vendors?
- A. To obtain information about current vendors in schools, a request for public information would need to be made directly with the school corporation. Request copies of contracts for x, y and z (e.g. food service, transportation, copy machines) from the school.
10. Q. Is there a way to learn more about the facility conditions?
- A. Any records related to these requests would be public records. Asking for information about the facility would not be specific enough, but asking the corporation for records created or received within the last 12 months related directly to the conditions of x, y, and z facility including but not limited to maintenance reports, repair invoices, insurance claims, etc. could provide information to learn about the facility conditions.
11. Q. Is the price an incentive for procuring a contract?
- A. The RFP has been amended. Please refer to section 3.2.3. Based on your details of your projected budget, the respondents who meet the State's current baseline cost will receive the maximum (10) cost points. The amended RFP is posted on the IDOA website as well as at www.doe.in.gov/turnaround.
- It is the intent of the RFP to identify an operator that can maximize the current resources available to a TSO that will result in providing a superior education when compared to the current model being implemented. It is believed that in most turnaround situations emphasis should be placed on evaluating all current expenditures and redirecting them to the appropriate areas which will ensure academic growth.
12. Q. How will capital costs be handled if a district already has money budgeted for a building in the next year?
- A. Capital costs will be negotiated with the current school corporation administration to ensure a safe environment for all students in the community.

13. Q. What do you mean multiple TSOs may run aspects of schools?
- A. The Indiana Department of Education will contract with one TSO per school. However, the TSO has the flexibility to enter into agreement with other providers. For example, a school operator might select to contract with another provider that specializes in credit recovery.
14. Q. Explain the performance bond. How would one secure a bond?
- A. To ensure performance, the IDOE will require each successful respondent to secure, by the time of contract execution, a performance bond in an amount up to \$250,000 per school. It is possible the amount may be negotiated during contract negotiations, but the bond will not be waived. The bond will be used to secure performance. If the respondent hits performance targets (agreed upon during contract negotiations) within three years, the bond will be released. In addition, the IDOE is hopeful it will be able to secure funding to provide a performance bonus for respondents that far surpass performance targets.
- Generally we would look for verification from a financial institution indicating the entity could secure such a bond.
15. Q. May we have access to budget; instruction cost data for the school?
- A. Current revenue projections will be made available to respondents to the RFP. The actual budget data and expenditure data of a particular school is not collected data. It will be made available when the schools and operators are assigned. This would not preclude a request of the school corporation for a particular budget for a particular school within the corporation.
16. Q. Should the RFP be school specific? Should it request specific schools? And how will schools be assigned to operators?
- A. In your proposal, it is important to indicate your capacity. Listing specific schools is an option, especially if you are not able to commit to particular regions in the state. IDOE will engage in conversation regarding preference for schools during the interviews and will assign schools while negotiating contracts.
17. Q. What is the position regarding existing bargaining organizations?
- A. The local contracts are an agreement between the district and the teachers' union. The contracts will remain with the district and not with the State Board of Education or the IDOE. The TSO will have the flexibility to recruit and hire effective leaders, teachers and staff.

18. Q. What will the relationship be with the affected school corporation?
- A. IDOE encourages the TSO to establish a good working relationship with the school corporation.
19. Q. Is the “cost” for our proposal relative to the State’s current cost per student?
- A. Yes.
20. Q. When and how will performance criteria be determined?
- A. IDOE will determine performance criteria when negotiating contracts. Short term as well as long term goals will be established.
21. Q. What is the plan for transition back to the affected school corporation?
- A. The plan for returning the school to the original corporation, making the school an independent school, or implementing some other management plan will be determined by the State Board.
22. Q. Is the contracted cost determined each year and would it be affected by future budget cuts?
- A. Each year the cost is recalculated and may be subject to economic fluctuations outside the ADM count.
23. Q. How will the cost evaluation be applied?
- A. The RFP was amended. Please refer to section 3.2.3.
24. Q. When does contact with “existing” school staff become appropriate?
- A. It would not be appropriate to have contact with existing staff until the State Board determines the intervention for the school which would take place in the summer unless the TSO had an agreement with the district for earlier access.
25. Q. May we expand the grade span or otherwise reconfigure the school?
- A. So long as the grades originally served by the school continue to be served and so long as all other requirements are met, the IDOE will accept proposals to expand the grade span or otherwise reconfigure the school.
26. Q. What if the district tries to establish new programs?
- A. Just as the TSO will establish new programs in schools, the district may also establish new programs. It is our goal for all students to have exceptional learning opportunities.

27. Q. May the district reconfigure the school?
- A. If the State Board assigns a special management team or otherwise intervenes in a chronically failing school, the school will no longer fall under the jurisdiction of the district.
28. Q. How do we get specific school data?
- A. Data is currently available at www.doe.in.gov/data. For more specific data, please submit a data request to kclement@doe.in.gov.
29. Q. Explain capital improvement. If the roof needs repaired, who is responsible for the cost?
- A. This decision will need to be clarified with the school corporation.
30. Q. What is meant by baseline cost?
- A. Baseline cost is the basic cost of educating a child for a year based on general tuition support.
31. Q. Please clarify the cost.
- A. Section 3.2.3 in the RFP has been amended. Based on the detail of your projected budget, respondents who meet the State's current baseline cost (i.e., state tuition support) will receive maximum (10) points.
32. Q. If an operator uses less than the ADM, what happens to the overage?
- A. IDOE recognizes that the TSO will need to pay for many start-up costs such as purchasing new curriculum, technology or furniture. In addition, the schools may decide to extend the learning time which will be an additional cost. In the case there being an overage, the State Board of Education will makes decisions based on rule making.
33. Q. When may the TSO have access to the school?
- A. The TSO may have access to the school once the State Board determines the intervention for each school.

34. Q. Which schools on the list have School Improvement Grants (SIG), and which are eligible for SIG grants?
- A. Currently, Hammond High School, George Washington Community Schools and Bendix School receive SIG funding. The IDOE will submit the state application to the US Department of Education in early December. The persistently lowest achieving schools list for 2010 will be posted in December. If the state intervenes in a school that is eligible for SIG but has not been awarded a grant, the TSO may write an application if funding is still available.
35. Q. What is the relationship between the turnaround school and feeder schools?
- A. While the turnaround school is no longer under the jurisdiction of the school corporation, it is still a boundary school that must accept all students within its geographical boundaries. In many cases, schools eligible for intervention are high schools, and the feeder schools for those high schools remain under the control of the school corporation. In that situation, the respondent has no control over the management of the feeder schools but will be encouraged to work with the school corporation to address concerns and challenges unique to the situation. We encourage the TSO to work with the school corporation and its feeder schools to have smooth transition plans.
36. Q. We are determining our interest in submitting a proposal in response to the Turnaround School Operator RFP. I have been unable to find the attachments mentioned in the RFP: Attachment B - sample contract, Attachment C - Indiana Economic Impact Form. Can you assist with providing copies of these attachments?
- A. The attachments have been added to the RFP. Go to www.doe.in.gov/turnaround for an updated version.
37. Q. If a vendor enters into a contract with the LEA or SEA through SIG funds for 2011 – 2012 must they be approved by the IN DOE?
- A. IDOE does not have an approved vendors list for SIGs. However, IDOE always uses a competitive bidding process when selecting vendors to assist with statewide activities.
- LEAs must submit their application to IDOE and it is scored using a competitive review. In the LEA application, the district lists vendors and the services they will provide.

38. Q. If the LEA receives a SIG award for 2011-2012 based on a proposed partnership with a lead turnaround partner, and is also in the lowest category, Academic Probation, will the state allow the LEA to contract for instructional support with a Lead Turnaround Partner which is not on the approved list for Turnaround School Operators?
- A. Yes. Lead partners with SIG schools and TSOs have different expectations. However, the LEA may contract with the lead partner to serve in a similar capacity. If a school that has a SIG award is turned over to a TSO, the TSO may amend the current SIG.
39. Q. If a vendor has several turnaround models, must both models be approved for implementation?
- A. The vendor would describe the models in the proposal.
40. Q. There was an earlier RFI on Turnaround Management Operator. Is the Turnaround School Operator the resulting RFP from the Turnaround Management Operator RFI, or is a Turnaround Management Operator RFP anticipated in the future?
- A. There is not a Turnaround Management Operator RFP anticipated for the future. The State Board may apply intervention during the 2011-2012 school year.
41. Q. If IDOE later puts out an RFP for a TMO, will Turnaround School Operators be invited to submit proposals on TMO?
- A. IDOE will not put out an RFP for a TMO. TMOs may submit a proposal to be a TSO.
42. Q. Will an audio or video replay of the Pre-Proposal Conference of November 10, 2010 be available? Is a transcript available? Where?
- A. There will not be an audio or video replay or written transcript. The questions and answers have been addressed in this document.
43. Q. Will school staff become the employees of the Turnaround School Operator, or will they remain under the current employer?
- A. The TSO may hire staff and the staff will be employees of the TSO. Current employees in the existing buildings will remain employees of the district and not the TSO.

44. Q. What is the state's baseline cost for this service? Is that the average funding per student, or is there some other cost calculation?
- A. The baseline cost is the current state tuition support.
45. Q. Is there a lease to the facility or will the TSO only responsible for maintenance?
- A. Per the IC, the department, the school corporation, and the special management team shall enter into a contract specifying the length of time, level of services, and entity responsible for providing necessary services to the school and students in the school, including, but not limited to, the following: custodial, maintenance, groundskeeping, and other services.
46. Q. What is the expected schedule for payment of turnaround operator fees/costs?
- A. The TSO will receive ADM funding in the same manner that districts receive funding.
47. Q. What will be the term (years) of the turnaround school operator contract?
- A. The IDOE's intent is to enter into a five year contract renewable on a yearly basis.
48. Q. Can you provide the web address for the rules being promulgated by the State Board of Education relating to turnaround schools?
- A. Currently, there is no rule. Once the December board agenda is posted, the proposed rule will be available. If adopted, it will move through the state approval process.
49. Q. Will the turnaround organization be able to utilize the buses, food service equipment, and other such types of support equipment currently used by the school?
- A. The TSO will be responsible for these types of support but may enter into an agreement with the school corporation for some of these supports.
50. Q. Will Attachment C be available in Excel format?
- A. Yes. It will be posted on the Turnaround website.
51. Q. To ensure the proposal reaches the IDOE, do you recommend using a shipping service like Fed Ex or UPS?
- A. Each TSO may use a method they feel confident for shipping proposals.

52. Q. What happens if a school is eligible for Title I but not served by the district?

A. The IDOE will calculate a proportional share of funding. The TSO would receive an allocation amount in which to apply for the Title I funds. All other ESEA funds will work in this same manner.